

Reviewing the Plan for Academic Enrichment

Report to the Faculty
December 2, 2008



BROWN

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A Little Bit of History



February 2002

- A Proposal for Academic Enrichment – aka the Academic Enrichment Initiatives
 - An effort to nourish some programs that need to be strengthened
 - Support others that are on the threshold of preeminence
 - Ensure that Brown's most highly regarded programs retain their leadership position
 - The imperative for these changes is our students – attracting and retaining excellent students and providing an environment and a support structure that allows them to do their best work
 - Lay foundation for a comprehensive plan for the University



Key Elements of the Academic Enrichment Initiatives (2002)

- **Faculty** — add 100 positions, improve salaries, start-up funds, and other support
- **Undergraduate student financial aid** - eliminate first-year work, adopt need-blind admission
- **Graduate student support** — cover health insurance, increase stipends and summer support
- **Academic support** – library, computing



The Plan for Academic Enrichment (PAE)

- Formally adopted in February 2004
- Incorporates and builds on the Academic Enrichment Initiatives of February 2002
- Extends the time period of outlook and planning from 3-5 years to approximately 15
- Much more detailed, more inclusive
- More attention to infrastructure and support
- Incorporates the Campaign for Academic Enrichment and other new sources of funding



Key Elements of the Plan for Academic Enrichment (2004)

- Increase the size of the faculty even beyond the first 100; be competitive in order to attract and retain the best faculty; support them in their work
- Attract the very best students at the undergraduate, graduate, and medical student levels; provide the best education possible
- Provide the facilities and other support to enable faculty and students to do their best work – new space and improved infrastructure, library and computing, administrative and other support



The strengths of the Plan -- a guide for University decision-making

- The Plan has set directions and aspirations based on the vision and goals of the community; details about how and when any of that could be implemented have been developed over time and within the normal planning and governance structure
- The Plan has evolved over time and has been flexible enough to adjust to changing circumstances



Accomplishments

- Growth in the size of the faculty - about 100 by 2008-09
- Undergraduate financial aid enhancements – need blind admission in 2003, reduced loans and parental contributions in 2008
- Strengthening of the Graduate School – more competitive stipends, summer support, 5-year funding guarantee, have begun to increase the number of PhD students



Accomplishments (cont'd)

- Improvement of undergraduate education – more courses, first-year seminars, research opportunities, better support of advising
- Expanded diversity of faculty and student bodies
- Created several multidisciplinary programs and centers; developed strategic partnerships with Trinity Theatre, MBL, Paris VI; joint degree program with RISD



Accomplishments (cont'd)

- Increased support for faculty and students – start-up funds, technology and library resources, support for multidisciplinary centers
- Launched internationalization effort
- Invested in academic facilities – Sidney Frank Hall, Pembroke Hall, Rhode Island Hall, Mencoﬀ Hall, Peter Green House, 70 Ship Street, 121 South Main
- Improved student facilities – classroom upgrades, residence hall renovations, J Walter Wilson, Friedman Study Center



Reasons for Undertaking a Review

- It is good practice – part of an ongoing accountability process
- We committed to such a review as part of the initial Academic Enrichment Initiatives (February 2002)
- The context has changed – both internal and external



Timeline for the Review

- Spring through December 2007
 - Engaged faculty, students, staff, alumni in review process (FEC, MFEC, Chairs, UCS, GSC, MSS, SAC, URC, APC, advisory boards, advisory councils, etc.)
 - Gathered feedback through meetings, individual comments via web, etc.
- January 2008-reviewed and summarized feedback
- February 2008-presented findings to Corporation and Community (e.g., February Faculty meeting)



Process

- Broad, inclusive
 - More than 20 meetings (& many informal conversations)
 - Many individual comments received via the web
 - Substantive suggestions/reports from FEC, UCS, SAC, BAA, advisory councils, others
 - Preliminary reports from Task Force on Undergraduate Education, Graduate School Working Group, Committee on the Residential Experience, etc.



Overarching Conclusions/Themes:

- The role of financial aid in maintaining our competitiveness and assuring access and affordability
- The importance of undergraduate education
- The critical role of the Graduate School in achieving and maintaining academic excellence
- The importance of strengthening academic departments



Recommendations: Three Primary Priorities Described in Report

- I. Continue to Strengthen Undergraduate Education
- II. Ensure Brown is a Truly Global University
- III. Enhance Academic Excellence Through Additional Investments in Departments



Overall Findings of the Review

The review confirmed that the Plan:

- Established the right goals, initiatives & strategies
- Focused on appropriate areas (people, facilities, etc.)
- Enabled significant & measurable progress
- Positioned Brown well for the future, setting the direction for continued improvement



But there were some areas of concern

- We underestimated the degree to which growth in some areas (e.g., faculty expansion) requires investments in other areas to provide the necessary support
 - Graduate students
 - Space
 - Research opportunities, tools & support
 - Technology, Libraries
 - Student advising, curricular innovation & concentration support



Primary concerns expressed by faculty

- Growth of faculty has not been matched by growth of infrastructure and support
- Particular issues had to do with support for the core work of the faculty – research, teaching, advising
- Specific examples included graduate programs, the library, staff support for research, and department budgets



So where are we now?

- The Plan is definitely a work in progress -- it has changed and will continue to change
- The current economic environment has required significant rethinking of exactly what we can do when
- Even beyond the economy, we continue to be subject to external developments that affect the implementation of the Plan – e.g., a donor with a particular interest or a specific partnership possibility



Response to Changing Circumstances

- Faculty growth has not stopped but it has slowed
- Development of vital infrastructure will probably take longer and be done more selectively – capital projects and infrastructure, IT and library support, departmental staff and budgets, etc.
- Compensation levels will grow more slowly – faculty and staff salaries, graduate student stipends
- Some reallocations or reductions will almost certainly be necessary



BUT

- We will continue to seek target of opportunity appointments to the faculty
- We will pursue selected academic initiatives that have the potential to further strengthen excellent departments and significantly enhance our teaching and research mission
- We will work to strengthen the infrastructure and other support needs through reallocation and rethinking



AND

- We will continue to work hard to raise money and make the case for Brown to current and potential future supporters
- We will continue to be guided by the core goals of the Plan
- We will continue to adjust the Plan in both large and small ways as the external environment dictates and as opportunities arise for significant moves forward



Questions?

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Resources

www.brown.edu/web/pae/

[Plan for Academic Enrichment \(2004\)](#)

[Phase II of PAE \(Review process and Priorities\)](#)

